Documentation of Khek-Bangka Language

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Language Info

Other names include Sam Khew Jong, Thong Boi, and Bahasa Bangka. There are an estimated 300,000 speakers. The language is spoken by people of Chinese descent on Bangka Island, Indonesia (Figure 1). It is a creole language based on Hakka (China) with loan words from other Chinese languages.

Writing System

Khek-Bangka does not have its own writing system; instead, speakers use the Indonesian alphabet if needed. Although Chinese culture and language are being revitalized in the post-Soeharto era, there are no publications or reading materials in this language because the language is not considered a major Chinese dialect. This research is an effort to create interest in Khek-Bangka literature.

Methodology

Data were collected using digital audio recorder. Fifteen native speakers were involved in either group conversation (Figure 2 & 5), story-telling, or one-on-one interviews. The result was 15 hours of digital recording that were transcribed, and some parts were further translated, for proverbs, stories, website material, and a mini dictionary (Figure 4).

Greetings

Typical greeting: Have you eaten? – Sit fon mang?
How are you? – Ngi ho mo?
What are you doing? – Ngi co ma kai?
Happy new year – Kyung hi ko sin nyen
Happy birthday – Kyung hi ngi sang ngit
Thank you – Si mung

Proverbs

Jit kiok thap liong son.
One leg, two boats.

One person – two romantic relationships. A two-timer.

Ngan ka’ ko.
Eye-lid high.

He has his nose in the air.

Looking Ahead

As Bangka people emigrate to urban areas and outsiders immigrate (figure 3), we need to raise the community’s awareness about language endangerment. If children stop using this language, it will disappear in two generations. Publishing and distributing a mini-dictionary and short-story compilation to the community is a good starting point.

Khek-Bangka Language Website

http://www.ling.hawaii.edu/~uhdoc/samkhewjong/

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References
